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THE Day of the Lord;

OR,

A Caution to the City of *LONDON* after the many Dreadful Fires.

Preached before the

RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE

Lord Mayor,

And the Citizens of

LONDON.

AT

BOW-CHURCH July the 9th.

1676.

By Dr. *CHARLES MASON*, Rector of St. *Peter Poor, London.* &

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V

To the Right Honorable

Sir *JOSEPH SHELDON*

LORD MAYOR

OF

LONDON

Right Honorable,

THis Renowned City and Glorious Metropolis, now, God be praiſed, has Beauty for Aſhes, but it cannot be unſeaſonable (ſince we have had ſo many after reckonings) to call to remembrance *our* ſins, that mov'd God to be to us *a conſuming fire*, leaſt the Lord ſay unto us as to *Edom*, *Mal.* 1. 4. *They ſhall build but I will pull down.* I have therefore publiſht this *Memento.* The Pillar Erected will be a tranſient Remembrance to thoſe who paſſe by it, or ſee it at a diſtance, if perhaps it does advert them, but

but Sermons read'd will put men into a more considering Posture. If this prove effectual in the least measure (for much I cannot hope for) to awak'n any to a serious consideration of that *Day of the Lord*, wherein the Earth and the works thereof shall be burnt up, I have my End.

Your Honors most obliged and

devoted Servant.

Charles Mason.

THE Day of the Lord;

OR,

A Caution to the City of *London*, after the many Dreadful Fires.

2 Pet. 3. 10. 11.

But the day of the Lord ſhall come as a Theif in the night: in the which the Heavens ſhall paſſe away with a great noiſe, and the Elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, The Earth alſo and the works that are therein ſhall be burnt up.

Seeing then all theſe things ſhall be diſſolved what manner of Perſons ought ye to be in all holy converſation and Godlineſſe.

WE read in *v.* 4. of certain Scoffers walking after their own luſts, and ſaying where is the Promiſe of his Coming? *i. e.* of Chriſt to Judgement, as *thoſe* who derided at *Ezekiels* Prophecy *chap.* 12. 27. The *Viſion* that he ſeeth is for many days to come. *Their perſpective* remov'd it at a diſtance and put the evil day far of. *That Chriſt* ſhould take vengeance on his Enemies in flaming Fire, had dreadful ſound therefore not eaſily beleived, but ſcorn'd; it was as *Noah's* Prediction of the Deluge, and the Deſtruction of *Hieruſalem*, foretold by Chriſt himſelf.

What the Wiſdom of the Ancients ſaid of *Caſſandra*, that ſhe

ſhe always foretold the *Truth* but never was beleived, that befell moſt of the *Divine* Prophets: They lifted up their Voices to incredulous People, and received contempt for their pains. If any man (though truly inſpir'd by God,) had bin ſent to this Nation to foretell the many dreadful fires that have made ſad Ruine and Deſolation in this Kingdome, he would have been received, doubtleſſe, as the Apoſtles were with the ſcoffers in that age, when they foretold the Conflagration of the world at the laſt Judgement day, therefore *God in* all Ages have given us ſome Types and Reſemblances of the *laſt* Fire by *which* the Elements ſhall melt with fervent Heat and the Earth alſo and the works thereof ſhall be burnt up. 1. in *Sodome* which broke out from the Fire of Luſt that ſo they might ſee their Sin in their puniſhment. 2. In *Hieruſalem* which was a *pledge* of the laſt diſſolution (ſo expreſſe that it has bin miſtaken for it) *deſcrib'd* 'tis at large by *Joſephus lib.* 7. *c.* 14. where 'tis ſaid that many places ſet on Fire by the Roman Army were quencht with the *blood* of the ſlain, *Joſeph. l.* 7. 18. and *it was fir'd as ours, in the beginning of September.*

To *theſe we* may add a *third* that which laid our *glory* in the duſt, and made this Royal *Chamber* a *Deſolation*, and *ſince* we have been *reminded* by many poſt clauſes, and after reckonings both at a *diſtance* and *neerer* home. Which have renew'd my Meditation on this Text, that ſo we may imitate our bleſſed Saviour who made outward Occurrents, eſpecially ſignal, *Sermons* to the *eye* reducing them to a Spiritual uſe, and as He, *who* pretends to be his *Vicar General*, claims a right to all the world in Order unto Spirtuals. *So* Chriſt who is truly Lord over all, *when* on Earth, made a Spiritual uſe of all things. Thus when he ſaw the Corn ripe for the Sickle, he put his *Hearers* in mind of that laſt Harveſt in which the Angels ſhould be the Reapers, *Math.* 13. So *John* 4. 14. when he

asks

asks water of the *Samaritan* Woman, he rais'd her Thoughts to the Water of Life, and after the miracle of Loaves and Fiſhes *Joh.* 6. he tells the people of that *Meat* that *endureth* to Everlaſting Life, *v.* 27.

Let us do ſo, make theſe dreadful Fires ſubſervient to a Spiritual end, to refine us from Earth, that ſo our Thoughts may be above where our true Treaſure is, *where* neither moth nor ruſt, nor theives, nor outragious Fire can enter; and what are all theſe *Earthly* flames, but as a ſhort *blaze* compar'd to that laſt Conflagration, when the whole Globe ſhall be One ball of Fire? *In* the words we may conſider, 1. The ſtyle, that time is call'd, by, the Day of the Lord. 2. Its unexpected ſurprizal, it ſhall come as a Theif. 3. The Terror of it in three things, 1. *Heavens* ſhall paſſe away ῥοιζηδὸν with a great noiſe 2. Elements ſhall melt with fervent heat. 3. The Eatrh alſo and the works that are therein ſhall be burnt up. Laſtly, we have the application of all this *Seeing then* that all, &c.

1. All times of remarkable Mercies or Judgments are call'd the *Days* of the Lord, (for the *Jews* were wont to *Aſcribe* that to God, of which they could give no account from Reaſon) *as alſo great and remarkable* paſſages of *Providence*, and this in *Spiritual* and Temporal Affairs. Therefore *Our Saviours* Birthday was the day of the Lord, which Angels celebrated, and *Abraham* rejoyced to ſee, as knowing the Meſſiah ſhould be derived from his line, it was the morning of our Salvation; of that day which brought *Life and Immortality to Light* by the Goſpel. So the day of his *Circumciſion* when he bound himſelf to the performance of the Law; the day of his *Paſſion* when the hand-writing againſt us was nail'd to the croſs, when he powr'd forth his Soul as a Sacrifice for our ſins; the days of His Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, to which is applied that of *Pſal.* 118. *The Stone which the Builders refuſed is become the Head Stone of the Corner*, and this is the day the Lord hath

made, ſo the day of Pentecoſt when, after he had led *Captivity Captive, he gave gifts unto men*, *Thus in Spirituals: but then in* Temporals there are many days to be aſcribed in ſpecial unto the Lord, by Us; *as the Fifth of November.* Our *Iſaac* was bound to the Altar, the *Hand* lifted up to cut off the pledge of all our Hopes, but an Angel interpos'd and reſcu'd us from that *Tophet* they had prepar'd for our Deſtruction: *and He Who hath delivered*, will, we truſt, preſerve us from both the extreams, between which our Church ſtands; *againſt* the latter of which we have, The *29th. of May*, the *Lords day* when *England* was reſtored to it ſelf, and with ſuch Triumph as when the Ark came into the Camp, all *Iſrael* ſhouted with a great ſhout ſo that the earth range again. But then there are ſignal days for Judgements. *Howl ye for the Day of the Lord is at hand, Iſa.* 13. 6. is a proclamation of that time againſt the *Babylonians*, wherein God would ſhake the Heavens and remove the Earth out of its place, *v.* 13. All things are diſpoſed by Gods ſecret Hand, but in ſome his Arm is made bare. Two black days we have in our Kalendar more eſpecially to be remark'd by us, 1. The *30th. of Jan.* one of Satans Maſter-pieces ſince the fall, for what greater triumph to him than to do his own work in the name of God, to commit Murder under pretence of Juſtice, to be *poſſeſt* by thoſe who ſaid they had intimacy with the Fountain of Holineſs, to turn Prayers in to Conjurations, to Ruin by Reforming, to cut off the Head for Preſervation of the Body, and with the Politick capacity to deſtroy the Perſonal, to make ſo many appeals to Heaven, ſub-ſervient to the Powers of darkneſs, and laſtly to inlarge his own Kingdome in the name of that Chriſt who came to bruiſe his Head, and diſappoint his malice againſt the Sons of Men? *That was a Day indeed*, not to be expreſt with words but with horror and aſtoniſhment. The 2d. is the beginning of *September*, wherein we became the Valley of *Hinnom*, and took up all the Lamentations

mentations of the Prophet *Hieremiah*. *The Jews* were wont to draw a *black circle* on a white wall to mind them of *Hierusalem's* deſolation, we have a *mute Pillar* to call to our Remembrance Gods firſt and greateſt *Viſitation by fire*, and ſince we have had many *Memento's*, *let* all theſe put us in mind of that Great and terrible day, when Chriſt ſhall *Come to Judge the Quick and the Dead.*

The *Majeſty* of this day and ſolemnity is ſet forth by the Son of God ſitting on a Throne, by the ſummons of all Fleſh to appear, by Attendants of Angels in all their Glory, and by the conſumption of the world by Fire. This day 2dly. will ſurprize the ſecure world, for 1ſt. there will be groſſe darkneſs on mens Underſtandings, *ſuch* was the condition of the Jews before their final deſtruction; though condemn'd, and *execution* near at Hand and ready to be turn'd-off, they expected a *reprieve*, *all* the *Warnings* given them were like that caution to *Julius Cæſar* to take heed of the Ides of *March*, which he ſlighted and ſo went to his fatal Ruine. *Even Then* when *beſieged* by Romans, and the Eagle hovering over the prey, they claim'd ſo great an intereſt in God as if all his Attributes had been ingag'd for their Preſervation. *This* condition is moſt *Dreadful*, and as *Jacob* ſaid of *Bethel*, this is none other but the Houſe of God: this is the gate of Heaven *Gen.* 28. 17. So on the contrary we may ſay of ſuch infatuation, (the forerunner of deſtruction) 'Tis the portal of Hell, the very gate of eternal darkneſs, therefore the Day of the Lord came on them as a Theif in the Night of Ignorance. When they ſaid the bitterneſs of death was paſt, their iniquity was unto them as a breach ready to fall, ſwelling out in an high wall whoſe breach cometh on a ſudden, *Iſa.* 30. 13. 14. *God* brought upon them *ſwift* Deſtruction. 2. At that time Faith will be wanting, *Luk.* 18. 8. (They are the words of our Saviour, foretelling the general incredulity that will pre-

cede his coming to Judgement) *when the Son of Man Cometh ſhall he find Faith on the Earth?* take Faith in either ſence, for Theological or Moral, both will fail before that day, 1. *They* who were counted Believers ſhall be found *Infidels*, the worſt *Renegadoes* from Chriſt, are the baptiz'd Atheiſts; and the greateſt Monſters, believing *Infidels*; I *mean* ſuch whoſe lives are a perfect contradiction to their profeſſion, and do as expreſly deny the Lord that bought them, as if they had *ſworn* with St. *Peter*, I know not the man. *Or if* we take Faith 2dly, in a moral ſenſe, for Truth or Faithfulneſs in *Words* and actions, there will be a general failing in this, men will *bend* their *Tongues* like their bow for lies, as *Jerem.* ſpeaks *ch.* 9. *v.* 3. and *verſ.* 4th. *Take ye heed every one of his Neighbor, and truſt ye not in any Brother: for every Brother will utterly ſupplant, and every Neighbor will walk with ſlanders.* Men will make uſe of words, not to declare their minds but conceal them. Thirdly, There will be deep Security; the *laſt Fire* will ſurprize men, as *many* times theſe Earthly do, when faſt aſleep, their Senſes lockt up, their doors ſhut and bar'd, ſo that nothing but the laſt *Trumpet* will awaken them, which will be *far more* dreadful then the *Thunder*: the end of which ſome Philoſophers have affirmed to be, to imprint fear in them who by words or Opinions did deny the Divine Providence, or ſought to ſhake off all fear of future Judgement, as in *Caligula*, who in the midſt of his jollity was ſmitten with terror by that voice from Heaven.

Now the ſecure are not like to expect Chriſt his Coming to Judgement, therefore ſurpriz'd they will be, and taken as *Siſera*, when the naile was driven through his Temples. *Now if theſe were the only ſigns*, we might well expect the near approach of this day. *But other* forerunners there are which our Saviour has foretold, *Math.* 24. 29, *The Sun ſhall be darkned, and the Moon ſhall not give her light, and the Stars ſhall fall from Heaven, and the Powers of the Heaven ſhall be ſhaken.*

But

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the Angels of Heaven, v. 36. Yet bold inquirers there are into that time, and confident determiners of it; *they tell* us that the great Fire began on the Lords day 1666. therefore the day of the Lord is at hand; *these* like the *Pythagoreans*, place much force in numbers (*for in* Creatures void of Reason, imagination supplies the place;) this *expression* in the Text is enough to confute them, *It shall come as a Thief in the Night.* To such intruders into Gods Secrets, that answer is fit which was given to a busie body, asking what was that which was shut up in a basket, you see it is *cover'd* because you should not know. Yet some reasons, or rather conjectures are given *why* it is conceal'd. 1. That at all times we may be provided, with our loyns girded and lamps burning: *as for* particular Judgement after death, *and as they thrive* best in their affairs who keep best accounts, so they in Spirituals that often reckon with themselves in Order unto the general *Audit*, and Judge themselves faithfully that they may not be judg'd, and most happy are they who live as if every year they expected Christs coming who will judge the World in Righteousness.

A Second Conjecture for the indeterminate Time, is that it might bring the greater Consternation on the obdurate by its surprizal, as the hand writing did to *Belshazzar*, for even the *Stoicks* who pretend to a freedom from passions, will yet start at a sudden flash of *Lightning.* Now the Terror of this day is expresst, 1. The passing away of the Heavens ῥοιζηδὸν with a great noise, *they shall passe, i. e.* shall not be what they now are, and this shall be with a *great Tumult*, like that of a violent Tempest or *Whirlwind*, or the breaking of a cloud, as *we usually* see in a Clock that moves in an equal and quiet course, untill the full hour be expired, then it *whirls* about making a *jarring* sound before it strikes: *So the Cælestial* Orbs that move now in order and equal harmony, when they shall come to strike their last hour, shall rush together with a violent

lent noyſe, either to ſhew the Horror of that day or their readineſs for diſſolution. *But whether* they ſhall paſſe away ſo as to periſh wholly in reſpect of the ſubſtance, or only be alter'd and Renewed in reſpect of their qualities, is a queſtion. *The Fathers* and Schoolemen are for the latter, and for this they allege, *Rom.* 8. 22. *The whole Creation groaneth and Travelleth in pain*, συνωδίνει καὶ συνωδῖνει words ſignifying labouring pangs, the *cauſe* of which grief is the *Vanity* and Corruption mentioned in 21. Now the *World* does not travel in pain expecting a Total Annihilation (for that every Natural thing abhors) but for Renovation or altering its condition, to be deliver'd from corruption, *into that* glorious ſtate when the *light of* the Moon ſhall be as the light of the Sun, and the light of the Sun ſevenfold, *Iſa.* 30. 26. and to this purpoſe they apply, 1 *Cor.* 7. 31. *For the Faſhion of this World paſſeth away*, as alſo *Heaven and Earth ſhall paſſe away.*

They *Underſtand* not of Annihilation but Renovation. This is the opinion of Antiquity, but is no Article of our Creed. *This being* ſuppoſed, that the World ſhall be alter'd only in the Qualities, the queſtion is, to what purpoſe ſhall it remain in its ſubſtance, without Inhabitants or Tenants, *To* this St. *Auſtine* in his Book *de Videndo Deo*, man has a two fold eye one of the Soul an other of the body, the former is fed only with the beatifical viſion, therefore leaſt the other ſhould be idle or ſuperfluous, the glaſs of the Creatures ſhall be left to look on, out of which the bleſſed *ſhall* aſcend to the Creator in their Meditations. The Schoolemen make a twofold eye in the Soul, one directly fixt on the Divine Eſſence, the other cometh to it by reflection on the Creature, ſo that in regard of the Soul it Self there may be uſe of the Creatures for the *Glorifying the Wiſdom, Power and Goodneſs of God*, therefore they ſay, this paſſing away of the Heavens is not in reſpect of the ſubſtance: *But* theſe conceits are but the fine ſpun phanſies of thoſe who

intrude into things they have not ſeen, *Col.* 2. 18.

The ſecond degree of Terror is in theſe words, *The Elements ſhall melt with fervent Heat*, &c. That God will bring men to Judgement, and that the *material* world ſhall be burnt with fire, theſe two the Fathers prove againſt the Gentiles out of their own writers, *Lactantius* in his ſeventh book of *Inſtitutions*, *ch.* 24. quotes a greek Author who ſays that at the laſt day, there will be πάσης γαίης σύγχυσις a confuſion of the whole Earth, when God ſhall come to judge Ζωντων καὶ νεκρῶν ψυχάς in engliſh the quick and the Dead, the expreſſe words of our Creed, & *Plato* ſays in his *Timæus*, that the juſt ſhall be conveyed εἰς μακάρων νήσους to the Iſlands of bliſs, of reſt, and refreſhment: *but* the wicked ſhall be condemn'd εἰς δίκης δεσμωτήριον into the Priſon of Juſtice. *Plutarch* gives us a deſcription of the place of Torments appointed for the wicked, moſt dreadful, in his book of Divine Vengeance. And for the deſtruction of the World by fire, *Juſtin Martyr* in his book of the *Monarchy of God*, cites divers Gentile writers, *Sophocles* who ſpeaks to this purpoſe, there ſhall be a time when the air ſhall poure forth πυρὸς θησαυρὸν and the flames ſhall conſume all things both above and below, *Lucretius lib.* 5. having ſpoken of the frame of the Univerſe ſays *una dies dabit exitio*, one day it ſhall periſh, and the whole *Machine* of the *World* ſhall be diſſolved. *Ovid* ſays there will be a time (which is now in the boſome of fate) in which the Sea ſhall be dried up, and the Heavens with the whole frame of the world ſhall be like a *fiery furnace*, and *Lucan* compares the Ruins and deſolation made by Fire, in the war between *Cæſar* and *Pompey* to the laſt Conflagration which ſhall reduce all things to the *Old Chaos*, and *mingle* Heaven and Earth together, *Minutius Fælix* in his *Octavius*, obſerves this to have been the opinion of two great Sects, Stoicks and Epicureans, theſe though they denyed any Judgement-day yet held that when the moiſture of the world ſhould be ſpent it ſhould break forth into flames.

Third-

The Third degree of this Terror we have in these words *The Earth also and the works thereof shall be burnt up.* They are call'd works of Earth because they tend to earth and terminate there, *all that* men project for, *all* the *Tumult* noise and smoak of the world is for Earth, so that I may crye out with *Jeremiah. O Earth, Earth, Hear this word of the Lord,* all that men labor for, all they pawn their Souls for, devoting them to *Everlasting* burnings, all the works of Earth shall be consum'd with fire. Some give us natural reasons for the end of the world, as 1. Languors and Diseases in Man, or decay of Nature make way and prepare the Soul for separation, *so in* the great World there are *changes* and *decays* as symptoms of a general dissolution, as St. *Cyprian* argues the case against those who objected all the calamities they suffer'd by fire or sword, to Christians. The world it self, says he, grows old and crazy and will you cast these things as faults on Christian which are the infirmities of old *Age,* in his Epistle to *Demetrianus* Proconsul of *Africa.* These I urge not as demonstratives, but to shew you that God left not himself without a witness in the dark corners of the world, but that this light shin'd to some of them, of a general Judgement and conflagration of the world, but our proofs must be from Scripture, *Psal.*102.26. speaking of the Earth and Heavens, *They shall perish, yea, all of them shall wax old like a Garment, as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. Isa.* 51. 6. *The Heavens shall vanish away like smoake,* and our blessed Saviour, *Math.* 24. *Heaven and Earth shall passe away. The Ruine* of the goodliest pieces of the world foreshew the dissolution of the whole, saies Sir *Walter Rawleigh*: The Glory and power of the mightiest Monarchs that ever the Sun beheld shadowed by *Nebuchadnezzars* Image; *Dan.* 2. are sunk into the dust *and become as chaff of the threshing floor on a windy day.* The Majesty of all the Primitive greatnesse of *Babylon, Persia, Egypt, Syria, Greece,*

reece, Carthage, Rome, is covered with duſt and Rubbiſh: *for hough* God has given man the knowledge of thoſe ways by which Kingdoms riſe and fall, yet has he left him ſubject to hoſe affections that draw on them fatal changes in their appointed time; therefore the greateſt and goodlieſt Politick Bodies that ever the Earth bore, though *animated* with the noſt *Searching* ſpirit of profoundeſt Policy, ſtrengthened with the Reſolution and Valour of moſt *conquering* Commanders, with the wiſeſt foreſight and comprehenſion of State, yet like the natural man they have had their Infancy, Youth, Mans eſtate, old Age, and ſhall have at laſt their Graves.

Now why the whole Globe ſhall be a ſacrifice to Divine Juſtice by Fire, ſome *Poſtillings* conjectures are made, 1. As under the old Law, that Leproſy which could not be purg'd away by water, was committed to the flames, a more ſearching Element; ſo the ſinful pollutions which the Baptiſm of the Flood could not cleanſe, ſhall have Fire for their Purgatory. 2d. This we find ſet down for the laſt Remedy (if I may ſo call it that cures the Patient by deſtroying him), *Heb. 6. For the Earth that drinketh in the Rain that coming oft upon it, and beareth Thorns and Bryars, is nigh unto curſing; whoſe end is to be burned.* *Now let us* ſee how all this concerns us: our Apoſtle has made a general application in theſe words, *Seeing all theſe things*, &c. 1. If God ſpares not this glorious frame of the world, but for our ſins it ſhall ſuffer, how ſhall he ſpare them who have made the whole Creation groan under the burthen of their Sins? *if the Heavens* and their Hoſt ſhall periſh, abus'd by mans Idolatry, *What* ſhall become of the Worſhippers? if the Earth ſhall be burnt for our Sins, what ſhall become of the Inhabitants that have defil'd it? God does ſometimes deal with us as the *Perſians* with their Princes, who beat their Pages for the faults of their Lords; *as in the* Curſe of the *barren* Fig-tree, Chriſt reprov'd mans unfruitfulneſs un-

der the means of Grace; *ſo when* God *ſmites* the Earth, turns our Seas into blood, daſhes our Ships upon Rocks, levels our ſtately Piles and Towers with the Earth, *calcines* our glory with fire, God aims at us in all this; and thoſe who are not ſenſible, 'tis fire brought home to their own Perſons; muſt awaken them from this Lethargy: Therefore to come neerer, 2. If the Conflagration of the world was made a motive to Righteouſneſs a thouſand ſix hundred years ago, (and the reaſon why then it was preſt; was the reſemblance between the laſt day and *Hieruſalem*'s Ruine approaching,) how much more *prevalent* ought it to be to us who have had a *perfect* reſemblance of it in this *City*; we read *Numb.* 11. 3. how *Moſes* called the name of that place where God had ſent fire amongſt them, *Taberah*; & *London* may very well bear that name for the ſame reaſon: *he has* made us as a fiery Oven in *his* wrath. But if this *prevailes* not, I ſhall draw yet neerer, *for 'tis* with us as with this City in the time of the firſt fire, thoſe who were remote from it were apt to promiſe themſelves ſafety, till the devouring flame came cloſer; till then they did not beſtir themſelves, but were lookers on with fruitleſs pity; Therefore 3dly, Seeing we ſhortly *ſhall* be diſſolved, and then all the world is diſſolved, (as to us) and then either Everlaſting burning ſhall be our Portion, or endleſs Glory; *If this* ſtartle us not the cauſe muſt either be 1. Infidelity, or 2dly, Groundleſs hope, or 3dly, Aſſurance of Gods favour. *As for the* firſt of theſe, I have ſhewn that many Gentiles have acknowledged a Judgement after this life, and conſumption of the world by Fire, and *the belief* of this made them abſtain from many ſins in practiſe amongſt us as 'tis *ſaid of Herod* when he heard that burning & ſhining light. This made them juſt *and devout* in their way till *Infidelity increaſt* among them, then I find one of their Poets complaining that *Iniquity* ſo far abonnded, that *boys* did not believe there were accounts in the next world: but Hell fire is clearly revealed to us by

Truth

Truth it ſelf; therefore *their* place will be hotteſt in thoſe flames, prepared for the impenitent, *who* were baptized into the name of Chriſt, *who believe* not what he has plainly declared. *The* baptiſmal water will make that fire more vehement to them. or 2dly. It muſt be groundleſs Hope: how few will apply this Doctrine of fire to themſelves; they will as ſoon take live Coals into their boſomes; *as when* a City is in flames, moſt think to make an eſcape, till it ſeizes on them, *till* then they run to and fro like ſparks in the ſtubble, every one ſhifting for himſelf. *Moſt* believe that *Tophet* is not prepared for them whatſoever their ſins be, and their impenitency and preſumption, *though* God has *ſworn* by himſelf that ſuch ſhall not enter into his reſt (and how deſperate is their condition who cannot be ſaved unleſſe God be forſworn?) Chriſt himſelf has ſaid to ſuch, *depart from me ye Curſed into Everlaſting Fire, Mat.* 25. 41. *prepar'd for the Devil and his Angels*: to deny the Truth of this is to ſtrike our Saviour over the Mouth by contradiction; *ſuch* ſhould conſider there is veracity and ſincerity in Gods threatnings, as well as in his promiſes; yet the former we are apt to apply to *Others*, but all the promiſes to our ſelves, *without* reſpect to the *Conditions*, leaving God bound in the Covenant and our ſelves free. If men ſhould deal ſo with us in Earthly Covenants, we preſently give them the blackeſt Character. Or, 3dly. 'Tis a well grounded confidence of Gods favour that keeps us immovable, under theſe dreadful ſounds and reſemblances of the laſt fire: whether it be *ſo* or not, let us come to trial by theſe two in the text, Godlineſs and Converſation, *i. e.* Holineſs towards God, and Righteouſneſs towards Man; which comprehends the duties of both Tables. 1. *Zechariahs* two *ſtaves* of *beauty* and *bonds* make a Nation happy in point of Religion, (as to the firſt table, and as far as Conſtitution may go) that is when we ſerve God in a *comely*, order, in an uniform way, in the bond of peace and *concord*;

of God, *who* has been to them in the killing letter *a consuming fire*. Secondly, Let them not look on them as greater sinners who have suffered, as if like malefactors they had been branded; this has bin a fault in all ages; not only in *Jobs* case, in *Theodosius*'s time when *Constantinople*, was fired the *Arrians* boasted as if God had owned their party, because he spared their Churches: and on the other side some Judge that City was taken by the Turks on the day of Pentecost, because they denyed the Procession of the Holy Ghost. *That* for Sins in general we are afflicted, is as true as that God governs the world, *but 'tis* not for man to assign particular causes.

Lastly, Since we find by sad experience that Cities on Earth have no certain Foundation, let us look up to that whose Builder and maker is God; and let us endeavour for that knowledge which will remain with us, and continue in the Soul when separate from the body; all other thoughts perish when man returns to Earth, *Psal.* 146. 6. of what use will the most exquisite knowledge be, when the world and the works thereof shall be burnt up? happy are they who are Citizens of that *Hierusalem* whose Priviledges can never be extinguisht, *whose* Charter cannot be reverst, whose *Mansions* are eternal, *which* has Salvation for Walls and for Bulwarks? And *Let it be* Our Prayer that God would give us the benefit of his Chastisements, that we may not forget his late Judgments, as if they had never been, and the overflowing scourge as if the sound thereof had never been heard in our Land; *that God* would awaken us before it be too late, to see those things that belong unto our Peace; that he would purge out our Corruptions, heal our backslidings, and make up our breaches, that *with one* Heart and *Voice*, we may praise the God of our Salvation.

FINIS.